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San Luis Obispo County

Department of Planning and Building GENERAL SERVICES

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TO: Interested Party
DATE: April 2, 2013
FROM: Murry Wilson – Environmental Resource Specialist
VIA: Ellen Carroll, Environmental Coordinator
SUBJECT: Las Pilitas Quarry -- Notice of Availability of Draft EIR (DRC2009-00025)

The Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the Las Pilitas Quarry is complete and available for public review and comment. The DEIR addresses the environmental impacts that may be associated with the request for a quarry and related improvements that would occupy approximately 41 acres within the 234 acre parcel. The proposed project is within the Rural Lands land use category and is located on the north side of State Route 58 and east of the Salinas River, approximately three miles northeast of the community of Santa Margarita.

Copies of the Draft EIR are available at the following locations: Santa Margarita Library, Cal Poly Library, and City/ County Library of San Luis Obispo. Hard copies are also available on loan and for review (CDs are also available) at the Department of Planning and Building, located at the 976 Osos St., Room 300, San Luis Obispo, 93408-2040. The EIR is on the Planning Department's web site at: www.sloplanning.org under "Environmental Impact Reports".

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:

The EIR focuses on the following issues: biological resources, wastewater disposal, water quality and supply, air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, aesthetics and visual resources, geology, public services and utilities, transportation and circulation, agricultural resources, noise, hazards and hazardous materials, recreation, land use, and growth inducement. The EIR also considers twelve alternatives in addition to the "No Project" alternative.

HOW TO COMMENT OR GET MORE INFORMATION:

Anyone interested in commenting on the draft EIR should **submit a written statement by 4:30 p.m. on May 20, 2013**, to me at:

Murry Wilson, Environmental Resource Specialist
Department of Planning and Building
976 Osos St., Rm. 300
San Luis Obispo, CA 93408-2040

If you need more information about this project, please contact Murry Wilson at (805)788-2352 or via e-mail: mwilson@co.slo.ca.us

PUBLIC WORKSHOP:

A public workshop will be held at the Santa Margarita Community Center (located at 9610 Murphy Street) on April 25, 2013 at 6:30 p.m. County staff and the County EIR consultant will be available to discuss the DEIR, the upcoming hearing process, and to answer questions on the information contained in the DEIR. While comments on the DEIR are anticipated, official comments must be submitted in writing to ensure the intent of the comment is captured and understood by the County and its consultant.

PUBLIC HEARING:

A public hearing before the San Luis Obispo Planning Commission has been tentatively scheduled for September 26, 2013, in the Board of Supervisors Chambers, County Government Center, San Luis Obispo. If you plan to attend, please call two weeks before this date to verify.

4.10 RECREATION

4.10.1 Existing Conditions

San Luis Obispo County Parks Department manages approximately 15,000 acres of parkland providing a variety of active and passive recreational facilities. Within the County of San Luis Obispo there are roughly 23 parks, 3 golf courses, and 8 “Special Places” (i.e., natural areas, coastal access areas, and historical facilities) operated by the County Parks Department. Urban regional parks account for about 644 acres; rural regional parks for about 11,398 acres; and mini, neighborhood, and community parks for about 214 acres (San Luis Obispo County 2006:12).

The County’s major camping, fishing and boating facilities are located at Santa Margarita Lake Regional Park and Lopez Lake Recreation Area. Although both parks are in rural settings, Santa Margarita Lake Regional Park (which is 8 miles southeast from the project site) has a more rustic feeling. This park provides scenic views, an extensive trail system, limited camping, and a peaceful setting. The closest park to the project site is Santa Margarita Community Park located approximately 2.4 miles to the southwest.

In addition, there is a proposed trail corridor located along the Salinas River as identified in the Parks and Recreation Element (Chapter 8, Table 5(b) page 65 and Map H). This proposed Salinas River Trail Corridor crosses generally through the southwest corner of the project site (Map H).

4.10.2 San Luis Obispo County Plans and Policies

County goals, objectives, and policies related to parks and recreation are described in the General Plan Parks and Recreation Element (San Luis Obispo County 2006). Many of these policies relate to regional concerns and the activities of the County and other agencies in developing recreational facilities, and do not relate to the evaluation of individual private projects. Several policies relate to the development of trail systems such as the Salinas River Trail, and these are addressed in Table 4.10-1 below.

4.10.3 Regulatory Setting

California Quimby Act Fees (Parkland Fees) are not applicable to the project since the project is a commercial use and not residential. There are no other specific regulations that affect recreational resources on or near the project site.

4.10.4 Assessment Methodology

The impact assessment in this EIR is based on a review of existing County recreational facilities and the proximity to the project site. Representatives of the San Luis Obispo County

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**TABLE 4.10-1
POLICY CONSISTENCY ANALYSIS – RECREATION**

Source	Policy Statement	Discussion	Preliminary Determination
Parks and Recreation Element/Policy 3.7	Trail Project Priority Criteria.	List of criteria for highest priority trail projects in the county.	Not applicable to project. Applies to County agencies.
Parks and Recreation Element/Policy 3.8	Trail Provisions to Protect Adjacent Land Use and Environment.	A list of provisions for trail projects to protect adjacent land uses and the environment. Most apply to specific design of trail when it is developed.	Not applicable to quarry project. Applies when specific trail is proposed by County.
Parks and Recreation Element/Policy 3.9	County Agencies Coordination.	County agencies will work together to coordinate the development, maintenance and use of trails.	Not applicable to project. Applies to County agencies.
Parks and Recreation Element/Policy 3.10	Extensive trail system shall be developed in viable segments.	Extensive trail systems such as the Salinas River Trail shall not be constructed until a viable link can be established.	Potentially Consistent.
Parks and Recreation Element/Policy 3.11	Eminent domain will not be used for trail establishment.	Eminent domain will not be used for trail establishment.	Consistent.
Parks and Recreation Element/Policy 3.12	Criteria for when private property may be considered for a trail easement.	A discussion of instances when a public trail, a trail dedication in easement or fee across private property shall be considered and may be obtained. 3.12.3. c. identifies consideration of a trail easement as a condition of project approval for a CUP.	Consistent.
Parks and Recreation Element/Policy 3.13	Trail dedication requirements as a condition of approval.	A discussion of criteria for a trail dedication as part of a discretionary permit.	Consistent.
Parks and Recreation Element/Policy 3.14	Required Finding for acceptance of a public trail corridor.	The approving authority must make findings that: 1) Sufficient funds are available for the trail's ongoing maintenance; and 2) The liability for the trail has been addressed pursuant to Policy 3.15.	Not applicable to quarry project. Consistency would occur at time of trail development.

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TABLE 4.10-1 (CONTINUED)
POLICY CONSISTENCY ANALYSIS – RECREATION

Source	Policy Statement	Discussion	Preliminary Determination
Parks and Recreation Element/Policy 3.15	County shall fully indemnify, protect and hold harmless private property owners who dedicate or grant a public trail easement.	Indemnification would accompany acceptance of easement or construction of trail.	Not applicable to quarry project. Consistency would occur at time of trail development.
Parks and Recreation Element/Policy 3.16	Abandoned public trail easement.	The County shall assure that if a public trail easement is abandoned, or if the liability acceptance is discontinued, the trail easement shall revert to the underlying property owner(s).	Not applicable to quarry project.

Parks Department were consulted regarding potential recreational concerns in relation to the proposed project.

4.10.5 Significance Criteria

With appropriate consideration of the significance criteria presented in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the County of San Luis Obispo has developed and adopted the following significance criteria to determine project effects for Recreation within San Luis Obispo County. Accordingly, the Las Pilitas Quarry project will have a significant impact if it will:

- a. Increase the use or demand for parks or other recreational opportunities, such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated; and/or
- b. Affect the access to trails, parks, or other recreational opportunities; and/or
- c. Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment.

4.10.6 Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Increased Use or Demand

Demand for park and recreational facilities is closely related to changes in population and housing. Increased demand for park and recreational facilities would be anticipated if a project would be a significant source of new population and/or housing. The project is a commercial quarry operation that does not include any new housing and is not a significant source of new population as identified in the initial study. Therefore, the proposed project would not generate a significant increase in use or demand for park and recreational facilities

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and would not contribute to or accelerate the deterioration of any park and recreation facilities. The project impact related to the demand for recreational facilities is less than significant.

Description of Impact	Mitigation Measure	Residual impact
IMPACT REC-1: Increase Use or Demand for Recreational Facilities. The project may potentially increase population and/or provide new housing, and it may potentially increase the demand for recreational facilities.	IMPACT REC-1: Increase Use or Demand for Recreational Facilities. Since this effect is less than significant, no mitigation is required.	Less than significant

Effect on Access to Trails, Parks or Other Recreation Opportunities

The proposed quarry site is approximately 1,100 feet from the Salinas River corridor at its closest point. A portion of the proposed Salinas River Trail Corridor generally crosses through the southwest corner of the project site. The construction and operation of the quarry will have no direct effect on access to any future trail in this area or on recreational activities such as hiking that may occur along the trail. However, allowed uses in the Rural Lands category on the balance of the site include agricultural activities and improvements related to agricultural operations. It is possible that these future uses may pose a conflict with the development of the future Salinas River Trail and/or may be incompatible with the recreational uses along this future trail.

However, the inclusion of a new trail easement on the larger subject property is addressed in this EIR since a discretionary action (Conditional Use Permit [CUP]) is required for the quarry and the County may include the offer of a trail easement as a condition of approval for the CUP, in accordance with Policy 3.12.3.c in the Parks and Recreation Element (San Luis Obispo County 2006:28). County policies also require that extensive trail systems such as the Salinas River Trail shall not be constructed on individual properties until a viable link can be established to create a larger trail. Acceptance of a trail corridor by the County must meet required findings including sufficient funds for ongoing maintenance and liability. Planning for trail development is a long-term process and there is not currently a viable planned segment that includes the project site. For this reason, only a very general description of a future trail on the property can be considered at this time.

Since the Salinas River is the unifying feature and most aesthetic focus for the regional trail system, it is reasonable to expect that the future trail will be located generally along the river itself, as opposed to a location along ridgelines or slopes in the area. Such a location would be well removed from the proposed quarry (by over 1,000 feet), but would occur in the general vicinity of existing grazing and agricultural operations on the property. For this reason, any future trail design would have to be developed with the property owner input,

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and would have to include appropriate fencing for the safety of trail users and the security of the property owner. The land near the river on the property is relatively flat, and consists mainly of a mixture of non-native grasses underneath oak trees. It is likely that a trail could be designed that would require minimum ground disturbance and drainage control, and would preserve all or most of the oak trees present. A more detailed evaluation of the potential environmental effects of such a future trail would have to be prepared by the County at the time a specific trail is proposed. In summary, this effect is considered a potential significant impact that can be mitigated.

Description of Impact	Mitigation Measure	Residual impact
IMPACT REC-2: Access to Future Salinas River Trail. Future agricultural uses, as allowed by the Rural Lands category, may pose a conflict with the development of the future Salinas River Trail and/or may be incompatible with the recreational uses along this future trail.	MM REC-2: Access to Future Salinas River Trail. Prior to issuance of a <u>Notice to Proceed</u> , the property owner shall offer a future trail easement for dedication to the County, along the Salinas River Trail corridor, subject to conditions and County policies to coordinate trail development and to protect public safety and property owner rights. The offer of dedication shall be a minimum of 10 ²⁵ feet in width and be located adjacent to the Salinas River (outside of the creek corridor). The final location of the offer of dedication shall be determined in consultation with the Parks Department.	Less than significant

Cumulative Effects

The project is about one-half mile distance from the existing Hanson Santa Margarita Quarry. Both quarries are within the EX1 Extractive Resource Combining Designation, as shown on Figure 3-1. In this region, the EX1 Combining Designation is placed over the La Panza Granitics, a large area that is classified as MRZ-2 by the California State Geological Survey (1989:9). Since this Combining Designation is specifically intended to protect mineral resources, it is reasonable to expect that future quarries will be approved and constructed in this area.

San Luis Obispo County Parks Department manages approximately 15,000 acres of parkland. Development of the larger Salinas River Trail system would have a positive recreational benefit. It may also have relatively minor adverse environmental effects associated with trail construction and increased human activity along the riparian corridor of the river. These types of effects are associated with all recreational trails and would have to be evaluated at the time when a specific trial alignment and design are formulated, which is when measures to minimize any adverse effects could also be identified. The applicant is requesting an approval for a quarry that would have a life of at least 25 years (or longer) and without the offer of dedication could potential result in fragmentation of the Salinas River Trail for a minimum of 25 years. Without the offer of dedication, the project could potentially result in impacts to County trail systems, as would all projects on lands adjacent to the Salinas River.

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Through the planning and environmental review of projects in the region, however, and implementation of County policies and other requirements, the potential effects on the Salinas River corridor and trail system would be less than significant.

In summary, due to the non-residential nature of this quarry and the Hanson Quarry, and the offer of dedication for the trail alignment, potential cumulative impacts to Recreation are less than significant.

Description of Impact	Mitigation Measure	Residual impact
IMPACT REC-3: Cumulative Effects related to Recreation. Development of the proposed project and future quarries in the region, along with future residential development in the vicinity of the Salinas River, may encroach on or adversely affect the Salinas River corridor and reduce its natural resource and recreational values.	MM REC-3: Cumulative Effects related to Recreation. Since this effect is less than significant, no mitigation is required.	Less than significant